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## Integrated management tools in the heritage of South-East Europe



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Directorate of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage  
Regional Co-operation Division

## Colophon

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Text: Part 1 of this publication sets out a series of National Reports and identifies the names of the various contributors of these reports.

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The Conclusion in Part 6 was prepared by Robert Pickard.

## Conter

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### Introduc

### Part 1

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## CONCLUSIONS

*Robert Pickard*

### 1. Characterisation and mapping systems

Characterisation studies and geographic information mapping systems provide a forward-planning tool to assist in the heritage management process. They can assist in explaining the importance of the heritage in relation to its local identity and context, and they can transfer heritage information to the planning process. The information they produce can be used to improve co-operation between different authorities – not just those responsible for heritage and for planning, but others such as highways and utility authorities responsible for infrastructure. For example, when proposals to build new roads are first being considered, they can provide important information about the heritage before a specific route is fixed (allowing alternative routes to be considered where there may be less impact on the heritage). Thus, they can assist the exchange and transfer of information for both horizontal and vertical co-operation between different competent authorities. The main goal of such systems is the provision of information to enable a more informed and integrated system of heritage management.

Such systems, when used for different management purposes, should have a degree of compatibility to allow the transfer of information to other local information systems. They should be structured in a simple manner, so that the information system can be developed as changes in areas or heritage information happen and opportunities occur to widen the scope of information to be recorded.

Digitalised systems require a certain amount of expertise in terms of knowledge of heritage and planning systems, as well as technical know-how. However, once the domains of information are determined, these systems should be reasonably straightforward to set up. Since the cost of information technology software reduces over time, the resources in terms of staffing to establish and maintain a map-based information system should not be extensive or a burden to public sector financial resources.

Once a system is established, the information fields can be widened in scope. Such information can be taken from a wide variety of sources including the local community, who may have wider knowledge of the heritage environment in which they live than the specialist competent authorities. Every point of contact in the assessment of the heritage in the field – with local people, heritage groups, investors and developers – can add new information to the resource base.

This form of information gathering not only informs directly the decision-making and management processes, but it can also inform the public: if such information is made generally available, it can educate people and raise their awareness of the heritage. If local



people are more informed, they can make constructive representations about heritage protection and management, within the planning and development control sphere and otherwise. Access to such information through electronic heritage and planning portals is now an important aspect of this management process.

Bearing in mind the Council of Europe's Core Data Standards (for architectural and archaeological heritage) and Guidance on inventory and documentations systems, it is now relevant to consider whether such standards and guidance on recording methods should be updated – in particular, whether the traditional notions of the heritage have changed to include not just assets designated for protection, but also other elements of the cultural environment (as indicated by the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for the Society: the Faro Convention, 2005) that deserve recognition in the heritage management process.

## **2. Environmental assessment**

A new awareness of managing change rather than simply protecting the heritage is a necessary step in the integrated process. Strategic environmental assessment (for plans and programmes) and environmental impact assessment (for projects) provide opportunities for instructive consideration in assessing, limiting or mitigating damage as a result of changes that development could bring.

At present, the main focus of such systems is the natural heritage. However, the cultural heritage makes an important contribution to, and is an essential part of, "the environment" in its widest sense. It is, therefore, relevant and necessary for heritage officials to have a role in environmental assessment processes. At present, there is little involvement in this context (and a lack of awareness by environmental assessment experts that cultural heritage is an aspect of the environment). It is, therefore, important for the responsible authorities – in the fields of heritage, environment/nature and spatial planning – to share information. There is also need for statutory consultation (i.e. by legal procedures) between all competent authorities in these related fields.

Awareness of particular heritage impact assessments may be drawn from the experience and methodology developed and used in Bosnia and Herzegovina – where environmental assessment expert groups include heritage officials – and there is horizontal and vertical co-operation between competent authorities. Characterisation and identification studies have an important role in this process. It is also necessary to develop and ensure "transparent" systems of environmental assessment, in which members of the local community can have the opportunity to make representations about, for example, a new road, which may have an impact on heritage assets.



### 3. Integration with spatial and urban planning systems

Drafting appropriate plans for safeguarding, preserving and enhancing areas recognised for their heritage quality and assets, and then developing them as statutory planning documents, can be assisted by characterisation and mapping studies. The latter could be produced by an appropriate service within one of the authorities competent in spatial/urban planning and/or heritage, at local or other level – or they could be entrusted to private sector professional consultancies. Mapping of particular buildings, areas and features in the environment can be linked to reference documents and interpretation documents for such buildings, features, etc. Safeguarded or conservation areas, either urban or rural, can provide the opportunity for linking heritage management, landscape management, land use planning and development control.

It is necessary to develop procedures and effective communication, as well as laws and regulations, to ensure that the cultural heritage is more readily taken into account in the planning process. Some participants noted that natural heritage has greater consideration in the planning process than cultural heritage – and that there is a need for these issues to be considered on a more equal footing.

It is also important to develop a system of public awareness and participation so that the whole community is sufficiently informed about their heritage and all possible interested persons are able to raise issues about it – businesses, residents, visitors, the employed and unemployed, and so on. Local knowledge of heritage and features that create identity should be drawn from the community so that information can guide planning policies. New ways should be found to encourage public discussion of heritage issues, because too often owners and developers are the only voices and they seek to object to heritage protection. The value of information leaflets, design guides and other publications should be recognised in this context.

Spatial and urban plans – and the policies behind them – need to be adapted to make them accessible to the general public, to enable widespread comment and discussion, which should include local heritage considerations. There is also a need for greater public participation in the development control process, so the views of the public are considered when decisions are made on applications for consent. It must be reiterated that public awareness and access to information are the keys to achieving this.

The capacity of the heritage should be scrutinised through the planning system to determine the limits of acceptable change that will not unduly harm the area's character. Moreover, it should be recognised that new development and rehabilitation can enhance areas. Giving the heritage a function helps to keep it alive. It is, therefore, important to realise the economic and social potential of the heritage.



#### 4. Consultation, authorisation, supervision and sanctions

The key issue arising from this theme is that the control of unauthorised and illegal activities affecting the heritage in South-East Europe generally does not work in practice, whether for political reasons (lack of political will to take action) or for other reasons.

There is a need for greater co-operation between administrative bodies with different competences, in authorisation, supervision and enforcement, not only horizontally (between ministries and between different local functions), but also vertically (between ministries and local authorities or between local authorities at different levels).

In general, the level of fines is insufficient to act as a deterrent. Also, action against unauthorised development needs to be taken immediately, rather than waiting until illegal work is well advanced. Swift, effective procedures, with co-operation between authorities, must be established for this purpose.

The long-term preservation of buildings can be aided by urgent assistance and technical protection. Protected buildings that have been abandoned or otherwise neglected, or only partly occupied in poor condition/repair, could be subject to emergency action to keep the building weather-tight, structurally stable and safe from vandalism or theft. "Mothballing" a building can protect it until it can be conserved or restored, found a new user or rehabilitated. Such urgent safeguarding procedures should allow the competent authority to reclaim the costs of emergency action if owners or occupiers are unwilling to undertake such action.

Furthermore, identifying which properties are at risk (by swift surveys of condition and occupancy) should enable priority action to be determined. More positive approaches are needed for heritage assets under threat or at risk. The competent authorities could be proactive in encouraging owners of buildings to maintain them, perhaps by helping to market them and find new owners who are prepared to take the necessary action. It is important to recognise that heritage buildings may have an inherent market value, so a small investment in maintenance and repair may realise a building with a high capital value, which can be used rather than being left neglected.

A positive approach should be taken to encourage owners of heritage assets to sell them to entities and organisations (public, private or non-government) that will accept the necessary works and take the required action. In extreme cases, it may be necessary to expropriate, but this can bring financial burdens to the acquiring authorities unless they can immediately sell to another organisation that is prepared to undertake and finance relevant works.

Revolving funds, and financial and fiscal incentives, should also be considered in this context.

The countries of South-East Europe should take all opportunities to obtain heritage finance from international sources, including pre-accession funds offered through various European Union programmes and other international funds. Heritage projects should be developed for submission to those bodies that may be able to offer assistance. There is an urgency to this type of opportunity and a need to be proactive – rather than waiting for assistance to be offered. This further necessitates active political support for such action.

## **5. Final observations**

This publication is the culmination of reports and presentations concerning the development of integrated management tools in the countries taking part in the Regional Programme for Cultural and Natural Heritage in South-East Europe. It is important to disseminate the messages from this discussion to decision-makers in the different competent authorities in these countries and to remind them that policies for the heritage should be properly included in relevant spatial and urban planning mechanisms. Moreover, there is a need to improve regional co-operation and the regional exchange of information, including the possibility of exchanging experts or developing trans-border or other joint projects on integrated management and sustainable development.



